

See How The Lord Of Hosts Is Near

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[0 : 00] So 1 Samuel 1. Now, there was a certain man in Ramathaim Zophim of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zoph, and Ephraimite.

And he had two wives. The name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.

Also, the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters.

But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb. And her rival also provoked her severely to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb.

So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, that she had provoked her, and therefore she wept and did not eat. Then Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?

[1 : 22] So Hannah rose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli, the priest, was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of God, and she was in bitterness of soul and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish.

Then she made a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant and remember me, and not forget your maidservant, but will give your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.

And it happened, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.

Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you. But Hannah answered and said, No, my Lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now.

[2 : 34] Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition, which you have asked of him. And he said, Let your maidservant find favor in your sight.

So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. Then they rose early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house at Ramah.

And Eli knew his wife, and the Lord remembered her. So it came to pass, in the process of time, that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked for him from the Lord.

Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord their yearly sacrifice and his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, Not until the child is weaned, then I will take him, that he may appear before the Lord and remain there.

So Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Do what seems best to you. Wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord establish his word. Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

[3 : 41] Now when she had weaned him, she took up with her with three bulls, and epheth a flower, a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh.

And the child was young. Then they slaughtered a bull and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my Lord, as your soul lives, my Lord, I am the woman who stood by you here praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord granted me my petition which I asked him. Therefore, I also have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he shall be lent to the Lord.

And so they worshiped the Lord there. This is the word of God for the people of God. Amen. Isaiah 40 says that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

And in Luke 1, the angel, Gabriel, who stands in the presence of the Lord, declared that no word from God shall be void of power. May it be so for God's glory.

[4 : 50] Would you pray with me? Lord, we beg you to please do the work that only you can do.

Please open the eyes of the blind. Please soften the hearts that were stoned. Lord, we pray that your word will be powerful in the way that your spirit applies it to our lives today, even from this ancient passage in 1 Samuel 1.

For your glory we ask. Amen. Reality does not depend on you and me seeing it.

You think that simple statement is true? Reality does not depend on you and me seeing it. Here's a simple illustration of what I mean. In Utah, not too far from here, is Arches National Park.

It's great. That's the reality. Whether or not you and I can see it right now, it stands there, and it's great. I've only gotten to go there one time. It was for an anniversary years ago.

[5 : 59] Grandparents were keeping our kids. And Andrea, my wife and I, we scheduled for a day-long mountain bike tour of this mountain on the Arches National Park. And the way we had signed up, I think it was God's providence, just a gift for us.

We thought we were going to be in this big group, a guided tour. And the group got divided in such a way that it was just Andrea and me along with this retired science teacher, probably in his 70s and way better shape than both of us.

And he took us on this private tour. And he was taking us off the trail and showing us all these really cool parts. And because he was a retired high school science teacher, he was telling us about the rocks and the trees and just helping us to appreciate all the greatness that was there all along.

So reality does not depend on you and me seeing it. It's there. It's great. Here's a true statement that is real, whether or not we see it.

Psalms 145, 18, the Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. The Lord is near all along.

[7 : 04] In this story in 1 Samuel, we see this glorious truth that the Lord is near his people, even when his people fail to see that God is near.

So beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what I've been praying for you and for me today is that by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, we'll be able to see how the Lord is near.

The Lord was near his people. The Lord is near you and me. We need our Lord. We need to be near him, don't we? Well, in this first chapter of 1 Samuel, I would like to walk us through these verses.

And I want to point out to you in six different movements or scenes how this is so. For context, it's our first time in this book. We have this little insight in 1 Chronicles 29, verses 29 and 30.

It says that the acts of King David are written in the book of Samuel the seer, the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.

[8 : 11] Three authors, one book. It's the book telling the story of David, the king of Israel. Really giving credibility to his kingdom and his kingship. Three different authors.

Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. And this is helpful because before we're too far in on the story, Samuel dies. And a lot more takes place in this narrative. So how could Samuel be the only author?

Well, in the original language, these were the books of 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings.

All one big historical narrative. And under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit being breathed out by God, he used these men, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and maybe other scribes and others underneath them, to supervise putting together this massive narrative.

As it was translated into Greek, it got divided into Samuel and Kings. And then for the sake of size and access, it then got subdivided again. 1 and 2 Samuel, though it's 1.

And 1 and 2 Kings, though it's 1. What about the location? Would you look at verse 1 with me? 1 Samuel chapter 1, verse 1. How does this massive book of the kingdom begin?

[9 : 23] It begins on a mountaintop. Verse 1 says, Now there was a certain man of Ramathayim Zophim. Rama means heights or mountains.

And in the plural. So heights. And then Zophim means views or seeing. So the heights with views. This is where this story begins.

In the rest of the Bible, it's called in the short phrase, Rama. It refers to these mountains of Ephraim. We don't know the exact location.

There are different theories, but I won't draw that out. What I want us to ponder is, what would be in sight? What would Samuel the seer be able to take in in his view from these mountaintops?

In the rest of this book, we read in 1 Samuel 7, 17, that these mountaintops were his place of retreat. They were his home. And Samuel the seer would go there for this great vision of the entire kingdom.

[10:26] And this is where he would sacrifice to the Lord on behalf of his people. 1 Samuel 7, 17 says, So Samuel's life begins in Ramah, the mountains, and it ends in Ramah.

And much of his ministry was out of this mountaintop hub. The mountains with views for the seer over Israel. From this vantage point, you can also look back at the rich history of Israel.

A rich history of God's faithfulness to his people. Notice how the rest of verse 1 gives us a reminder of this long history. This certain man's name was Elkanah, the son of Jehoram, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zeph, and Ephraimite.

The reference to his tribe takes you all the way back to the people of God as they were being brought into the land. And who was it as they were coming into the promised land that was also from the great tribe of Ephraim?

The name Elkanah also points to God's long history of faithfulness to his people.

[12:00] Elkanah, the name that his parents gave him, it means God, that's El. God has created or God has acquired. To this couple who named their baby, that's what they want to proclaim to everyone who meets their new little baby.

God has created this one. God has acquired for us a child. Just as God has created this nation of Israel out of nothing and acquired a people for himself, giving them a land of abundance, Elkanah exemplifies Israel.

God has been faithful to preserve his people in this land from every generation, from Joshua all the way up to this point now of Elkanah, this man who lives in these mountains.

God has been faithful to watch over them because God is their king. You and I have reminders every day, just like Elkanah did, of God's glorious sovereignty.

God's led us to live these years, at least here near the Rocky Mountains, the most beautiful mountains on this continent. A faithful God watching over his people, preserving us.

[13:16] A reminder that God is ruler of all. He is king and he is ruling over his people. Well, that's our first movement or scene. So Israel, like Elkanah, had this rich history and daily reminders of God's goodness, but how did they live?

That's our second movement. How did the people of Israel live at this time in the land that God gave them? We don't have to get too far into the story to get some strong hints.

Look at verse 2. I say these are hints.

I think we are to be careful readers of God's word and then also to make those observations in light of all the rest of scripture. So I think not only was Elkanah an example in this story of Israel, a microcosm, one man's life, exemplifying an entire nation.

But I think his attitude is what is reflected throughout this chapter. Because right before this story, God's word leaves us with a cliffhanger in the book of Judges.

[14:29] And some of the craziest stories that we will read in the Bible come in this book of Judges. We're told the very last verse, Judges 21, verse 25. In those days, and still in these days of Elkanah, there was no king in Israel.

Don't think for a minute that was a good thing. That verse says everyone did what was right in his own eyes. We don't want to live in a town where everyone is allowed to do whatever seems right in their own eyes.

This would be a scary nation to live in. Would you look at our passage, 1 Samuel chapter 1, all the way down to verse 23. See if you pick up on a similarity in his phrase.

Elkanah says to Hannah, do what seems best to you. Again, I don't want to vilify Elkanah if that's not the intent.

But I think the similarity is striking. We leave off and we have this part of Judges sticking out, looking for the phrases and the words that are going to overlap now leading into this next story of

the rise of a kingdom.

[15:37] And apparently this is how Elkanah lived. Hannah is named first, most likely his first wife. We're told she is barren.

And if the attitude of the day is to do what seems best in your eyes, as he told his wife, do what seems best to you. It's very likely that Elkanah took matters into his own hands by getting a second wife who would not be barren.

Simple principle is that if we bend God's law just enough so that you and I can stay in control and take matters into our own hands, then we too are living no better than Elkanah.

We live as if there is no king. Now, when the Bible describes a man who had two wives, the Bible is not prescribing that, saying, go and do this as well.

Much of what we read in the Bible is simply a description of how God redeemed sinners. It's how they were living and what God did about it. How he is not far, he is near even people like this in Israel.

[16:40] So, it's descriptive, not prescriptive. What is clear is that God clarifies, Jesus says in the New Testament, that yes, the Lord allowed for divorce.

And if these Israelites were going to drop one wife, there were regulations so that the widows would be provided for. And Jesus says, God did not design that. That was because of your rebellious hearts toward God.

The Bible is clear in Genesis 2, 24, that a man, one man, shall leave his parents and cleave or hold tightly to his wife.

And the two, not the three or four or five or six, shall be one. This is God's good design. And every time that the Bible does describe polygamy, more than one spouse, more than one man or woman in a marriage, it always equals domestic strife.

Would you remember that Elkanah's parents named him God has created or God has acquired? Elkanah's parents, just one generation prior, they knew it is God who gives the gift of life.

[17:50] It's God who acquires a child when man can't. Elkanah seems to have lost his parents' high view of God's sovereignty.

A high view of God's sovereignty must be rediscovered by every new generation. Isn't that true? You think of your own story. When was it that God elevated himself up in your mind, in your heart? And as you think of your children and grandchildren, as high of a view as God has given you, God has to give that to them, doesn't he? Each new generation must know there is a sovereign God. Do we live as if there is no king? Do we take matters into our own hands? Or do we trust there is a sovereign God? He is the giver of life.

And he will acquire for his people whatever we need. Well, the third movement is the result of living in such a way. Without the sovereign God as king, what becomes of your worship?

[18:55] Without God as the sovereign king overall in your mind, what becomes of your worship and mine? We read in verse 3 that this man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.

Shiloh is about 20 miles north of Jerusalem. If you were to visit there or look up pictures, you could be able to see a terrain that looks very much like it does here.

These are rolling, desert, semi-arid, rocky hills. It would be a nice place for a hike. And it's significant because in Joshua chapter 18, we're told that the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there.

Before Joshua, when Moses was with the people of Israel in the wilderness, there was the tent of meeting. This is where the glorious presence of God would come and dwell with his people. So Shiloh now, over these generations, has come to represent God dwelling near his people.

And this is where his people would gather to be near him and to worship him. Also in verse 3, we're told that the God who lives in Shiloh is the Lord of hosts.

[20:13] The Lord of hosts. In the original language, it's Yahweh Sabaoth. Yahweh Sabaoth. This is a significant name for God.

It's the first time it's used in the Bible is right here in this verse. Yahweh is God's covenant-making, covenant-keeping name. So to refer to him as Lord or Yahweh, you're referring and reminding yourself he is a God who made a covenant with us and who will keep his covenant to us.

And Yahweh Sabaoth. Sabaoth means the Lord of armies. The Lord of war. The Almighty King. He has been near Israel all along.

He has been ready to minister to true worshipers. And this is where Elkanah's family goes, to Shiloh. In verse 4, we read, whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering. See, on the outside, Elkanah is still doing as he was told. He's following the law. He's going at least through the motions. But we keep reading and we find out that his own home was a wreck.

[21 : 26] Elkanah would give portions to Peninnah, his wife, and all of her sons and daughters. In verse 5, he says, To Hannah, he would give a double portion for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb.

Hannah had Elkanah's love. Peninnah had Elkanah's children. Because God was not truly king of their lives, their worship was empty.

We'll see this more and more as we read the story. And this same principle is true for us. If we don't know the Lord of love, if we don't know God, we begin to worship creatures instead of God.

And the moment our hearts turn to worshipping anything less than God, we are sowing destruction for our own lives. Isn't that true? If we worship and love creatures, even our own family, like Elkanah, which is so tempting to do, then you can't enjoy the love of the Lord himself.

I think one reason that this family is how this story begins, the story of the kingdom of Israel, is because this family is a picture of the whole nation. In Mark 3, 25, Jesus says, A house divided against itself cannot stand.

[22 : 57] So this first household, in this first chapter of this first book of the story of the kingdom, it's foreshadowing the kingdom of Israel. So by the end of 2 Samuel, we'll have the kingdom of Israel, instead of being under one God as their king, now divided as two kingdoms with men over each.

Well, Hannah's name means gracious. Hannah, we see is gracious on the inside. Penina means pearl.

It's possible that Penina was, in fact, fitting her name, pleasing on the outside, to the eye only. Penina may have been attractive on the outside, but inside we see that she was likely hurt and behaving in a vengeful way.

We read in verse 6 that Hannah's rival also provoked her severely to make her miserable because the Lord had closed her womb. It was the Lord who had made Hannah barren.

This was God's providence for Hannah's life. And Penina, in a place of worship, is mocking Hannah.

[24 : 14] By doing this, Penina is really mocking God's providence. She used the time of worship to provoke, and it worked.

Look at verse 7. It wasn't a one-time bad day. It was year by year when she went up to the house of the Lord that Penina provoked her.

Therefore, Hannah wept and did not eat. Penina had a false, empty, broken faith.

One churchman with many decades of experience observed that most, sometimes the most spiteful hearts will often wear an outward show of religion as mask.

Some of you have been hurt by those inside the church, the worst. Without God as sovereign king, we would be just like Penina. We would not worship the Lord, but instead spite his providence, and by worshipping the creatures inflict serious injury on one another.

[25 : 20] We would fall into false worship. Maybe there's someone here who doesn't know true worship still. You don't know the true God. And if you are tired of empty, outward motions, God calls us in his word to fall before him as the sovereign king in worship.

Without God as our sovereign king, we would be empty that way as well. Well, the fourth movement here is that the Lord is still near his people, especially in their weeping.

And he has a love for his people when they're hurting like this, like Hannah was, like a husband would have for his bride. We see the love of God contrasted with Hannah's husband in the story.

Look at verse 8. Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Hannah, why do you weep? Do you not eat?

And why is it that your heart is grieved? Well, anyone who is a man and a husband can relate to not being very sensitive, not reading the obvious reasons.

And from his point, maybe it's not so obvious. He's doing his best here. And to Hannah, it's just so painfully obvious. How could you miss it? Elkanah's flaws, at least in my assessment after studying this passage for a few weeks, his flaws are numerous.

[26 : 46] An unobservant husband, he fails to keep his own household orderly. He allows painful provoking instead of true worship. And what's more, look at verse 8.

He says, am I not better to you than 10 sons? In Israel, God says it's blessed to have children. In an agrarian culture, it would have been necessary, more hands to work.

And he says, this is maybe like an equivalent of an ancient Israelite love song that you'd hear on the radio. Am I not better to you than 10 sons? He wants to be for Hannah, her all in all.

The number 10 is a number of completeness or abundance. He says, Hannah, just by being married to me, don't you have all the family you could ever dream of? You should be totally fulfilled with me as your husband.

Don't I complete you? Aren't I your abundance? We have songs like that too, you know. I'm only one call away. I'll be there to save the day.

[27 : 48] Superman's got nothing on me. And then, you know, the girl's just sitting there rolling her eyes like, oh, brother, who does this guy think he is? Well, Elkanah wants to be for Hannah what only God truly can be.

God must be the king. Elkanah, you're her husband, but you are nothing compared to what her soul truly needs. I think I can be so much like Elkanah.

We want our loved ones to be content, but we so quickly forget that we too are creatures. That's all I am. That's all I'll ever be. I can never be what you need, which is God himself.

Well, after Elkanah's best effort at offering himself to be his wife's full satisfaction, Hannah just simply in verse 9 arose.

After she had finished. We're told that she wasn't eating, but then she still finished. In other words, she's graciously sitting through this torturous meal.

[28 : 49] No response. Awkward. You can cut the tension with a knife. She just arose and leaves. Doesn't say anything. But then there's this wonderful little detail at the end of verse 9.

A reminder of where all this is happening. What does verse 9 say at the end of yours? They're in Shiloh. Shiloh is where the Lord meets you.

This family is emotionally distant from one another. Their worship is empty, going through these outward motions. But it's in Shiloh.

It's near the presence of the Lord, the sovereign king. He's there all along, even if they don't see him. His spirit was already in Shiloh, ministering, ready to receive the hurting ones.

Those who are barren. The gracious believer. The Lord is near you. We know that the Lord of hosts is love because Christ has made the church his bride.

[29 : 56] And for all of our failings as men and husbands or spouses or parents or grandparents, the Lord himself offers the love that our souls need. And it's his own son, Jesus Christ.

We read in Ephesians 5.25 that Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, and that he might present her to himself as a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy without blemish.

Received, embraced, fully, content, satisfied with God in Jesus Christ. We are faithless like this family, but God is faithful.

And the Lord of hosts is near you as well. He's near his people, especially in our weeping. And he's there to love you and me as his church, his precious bride.

But when our souls are anguishing and bitter, the Lord is there for us, not only as the husband, but also as the priest. The next contrast I see is with Eli the priest.

[31 : 12] Remember how the New Testament in Hebrews emphasizes how Jesus Christ finished his work and he sat down at the right hand of the Father. He sat down as high priest because his work is finished.

So the ancient Jewish reader would understand that a priest only sits once the work is finished.

Well, look at verse 9. Now, Eli the priest was, what was his posture?

He was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord. As we keep reading into chapter 2, Eli is described as laying there.

Eli is described as being even older and as being blind. Eli is the picture of a passive priest. He was passive with his sons.

Their names are mentioned here to simply introduce them because they're going to expose even on a bigger level how horrible the worship was in the presence of the Holy God at this time in redemptive history.

[32 : 17] In verse 10, we read that Hannah was in bitterness of soul and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. Of course she wept. Of course her soul was anguishing.

Family was a painful topic. The future was a depressing thought. So many sour emotions swelling up, suffocating.

Can't even get the words out to pray. In verse 13, Hannah spoke in her heart only as her lips moved but her voice was not heard and therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

It's the job of the priest to be ministering to God's people, to be watching them, to be caring for their souls. And Eli assumes she's drunk probably because that type of debauchery was going on around the meeting of the Holy God in Shiloh.

In verse 14, Eli said to Hannah, how long will you be drunk? Notice how Eli did not hear her prayers and he did not offer to pray with her and minister but instead he scolds her.

[33 : 26] In verse 17, Eli says, go in peace. But when he gives her this blessing, he's using God's generic name. He says, the God of Israel. And earlier in this chapter, God is introduced as Yahweh, Sabaoth, the king of armies, the covenant-keeping God, not just the God of Israel.

And Eli says, may God grant the petition which you have asked. In other words, you ask for what you wanted. May you get what seems right in your eyes like everyone else in Israel.

Both men in this story, Eli and Elkinah, exemplifying the attitude. Everyone, do what's right in your own eyes. May you get whatever you want. Although her voice was not heard, God heard Hannah's prayer.

When you and I pray, even when you can't get the words out, and I know some of you have prayed such prayers even these weeks, we know God hears us because we have a much better high priest, Jesus Christ himself.

Hebrews 2.17 tells us that Jesus became for us a merciful and faithful high priest. He made propitiation for the sins of his people. He satisfied the wrath of God.

[34 : 45] He became our shield. And he ministers God to us. He forever lives to pray for us. And his Holy Spirit brings our prayers to him.

And he repeats those prayers to God, ministering out of love for you and me. We're told in verse 10 that Hannah was in bitterness of soul and she prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish.

God the Son took on flesh. Truly God, adding on truly man so that he could know such anguish and be a priest who can identify with the suffering of his people.

As high priest, Jesus felt our anguish of soul. Hebrews 4.15 tells us Jesus can sympathize with us in our weakness. He can hear our prayers.

In verse 15, Hannah poured out her soul to the Lord, we're told. And in Hebrews 4.14, we're told that we have a great high priest. One who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.

[35 : 53] And he has opened up the access, full access. So we are in the presence of the loving God, our Creator, who is ministering and pouring God's love over you as you weep to him and cry out in bitterness of soul, Jesus is your high priest.

You see how the Lord of hosts was near his people all along? He's near Hannah. He's even near Elkanah and Peninnah and Eli and Eli's sons.

If they will acknowledge him, if their view of God as their sovereign Lord, the Lord of hosts, Yahweh, the King of armies, he is near.

He is their King. When our souls are anguishing and bitter, our Lord himself is near to minister to you and me as well. Well, the sixth and final movement for today is that as sovereign King, God orders his kingdom for his glory and our good.

And that's really what the rest of all of these books are about. How is God going to order his kingdom for his glory and for the good of his people? You see how when Hannah was most hurt, most desperate, most dependent on God alone, God ministers to her and teaches her.

[37 : 17] Up to verse 10, we've seen this prayer of intensity. And now we see what she learned coming out of that weeping in Shiloh. In verse 11, we're simply told the outcome.

Then she, Hannah, made a vow and said, this is the outcome. On the other side of this crisis, this is how she prays. Oh, Lord of hosts.

Hannah declares the name of God, Yahweh, King of his people. Oh, covenant-keeping, God of armies, Lord of war, Almighty King. In my nation, everyone does whatever seems right in their eyes, but please teach me to live as if you are the true king.

You are my king. That's what she says with these words. In verse 11, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant and remember me and not forget your maidservant, you, you be my priest, Lord.

I will be your bride and if you will, give your maidservant a male child. Well, here's one more barren woman in God's ancient people.

[38 : 33] She's in good company with Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel. Why is it that God loves to minister to the barren, those who can't have children on their own?

It reveals that when we are most helpless, most weak, God is sovereign. He gets all the glory and it's for our good in Him.

He's reminding that He is the God who keeps His covenant. Here's a barren woman who cannot generate life and God loves to bring life to that which is dead and barren.

We are all dead and barren in Adam and the Lord regenerates. His Holy Spirit is breathed out. Jesus preaches this to Nicodemus.

How can a man like me be born again? The Spirit breathes wherever it wills. The Spirit of God is sovereign and He alone can generate life where there is nothing.

[39 : 39] Nothing. verse 11 we're told the vow. Hannah says, then I will give Him to the Lord.

What God taught Hannah is revealed in this vow that she makes. Her motive now, at least, on the other side of the crisis and on the other side of praying and God ministering to her is not to please her husband.

Her motive is not to spite her rival and it's not even for her own contentment. In gratitude, she is now seeking first God's kingdom.

The Lord has taught Hannah to be content with Himself. In gratitude, she will give back this very son all the days of His life. And then she says something maybe unexpected.

She says, no razor shall come upon His head. Well, this is a Nazarite vow as was given to the people of God in Numbers chapter 6 that a man or a woman could temporarily consecrate themselves to God for a period of time.

[40 : 51] It seems maybe random or out of context that she would now pull this somewhat obscure reference up to say, if I'll give my child back and I won't shave his head, it'll be a Nazarite vow I'll make on behalf of my son.

But think of one more barren woman in the story of redemption and this would be the most recent example on Hannah's mind and on the minds of all the Israelites coming out of the book of Judges. We don't even know the name of this barren woman, we know her husband's name, his name was Manoah, we can call her Mrs. Manoah. She was the mother of the last judge of Israel.

You know the name of that judge, don't you? It was Samson whose hair would not be cut. He was used by God to fight the Philistines. The Philistines were a people living in this land, the promised land that God gave to Israel.

And what's happening at this time in world history is that in Greece, they're using iron to make weapons. And the weapons of ancient Greece make all of the other weapons that any other people group could come up with in this early iron time period as if they were made of wood.

[42 : 02] These iron weapons make it as though the nation of Israel are a bunch of children with plastic toys. The Philistines have their hands on iron weapons. Everyone knows this.

Are we going to lose our land? They've already taken the entire Mediterranean coast of Israel. The Lord raised up Samson, but we all know how the book of Judges ends.

It's crisis and chaos. Israel has no king. And they're so proud they won't worship God as their king. Hannah says, I will give this child back.

No razor will touch his head. Hannah's acknowledging to God, Lord, beyond my own wounds, beyond my needs and desires, the real need right now for Israel, for your people, is that Yahweh, the Lord of hosts, will rule as our king.

And if it's your will, may you do it through another Samson, my own child, that I'll give back to you. We read at the end of this chapter in verse 27, Hannah says, for this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me the petition which I asked of him.

[43 : 15] Her heart now knew what her mind accepted initially. It's that promise from Psalm 145, 18. the Lord is near to all those who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

She says in verse 28, therefore I have also lent him to the Lord, as long as he lives, he shall be the Lord's. See, it was God now who has Hannah's heart.

Her heart was God's above her husband, above competing with her rival, and even above Samuel, her beloved son. The name Samuel means God has heard.

Samuel is the embodiment of answered prayer. In verse 28, we're told simply, they worshipped the Lord there. Because the Lord worshipped to her what felt empty when they first went to Shiloh, what felt like a wrong focus in the middle of their worship.

As they looked around their nation, it's hopeless. It's now been transformed by the ministry of God into fullness, true worship, and hope.

[44 : 35] Hope for herself, and hope for God's people. In the 1500s, Martin Luther, one of the reformers, he had been deeply troubled personally by empty religion, by the manipulation of the word that God had given to his people.

It was a time where the visible church was hopeless. And this same truth about God ministered to Martin Luther and to generations since then. Listen to this hymn, did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right man on our side, the man's of God's own choosing.

Thus ask to that might be Christ Jesus, it is he, Lord Sabaoth. The Lord of armies is his name, from age to age the same, and he must win the battle.

You see how the Lord of hosts is near you as well, church. Let's go to this Lord, let's receive his ministry as our priest. Would you pray with me? Oh Father, we thank you that you are near your people, you are ministering to us, you receive us and you lavish your love upon us.

We praise you Father for the greater priest, the greater husband that we have, Jesus Christ himself, and we thank you for how you do not abandon your people.

[46 : 08] You have a plan to redeem every soul that comes to you. I pray Lord, if there are those here who don't know you, that they will run to you today, Jesus. If there are those who have brought you lower, just a notch lower, that you will elevate yourself as sovereign God, the Lord of armies, that we can trust you are our portion, you are our shield, in you are we satisfied, and in you alone, we ask this for your glory in our lives.

Amen.